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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000448

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: MCNS ON FEBRUARY 10 DISCUSSED AIRPORT SECURITY,
IRAQI ARMY FORCE GENERATION, AND SECURITY COMMITTEES

REF: A. A) BAGHDAD 00375
[1](#)B. B) BAGHDAD 00422

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Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (S REL UK AS) In a meeting chaired by D/PM Barham Salih, the MCNS received a concise, well-organized briefing on 2007 force generation results for the Iraqi Army, discussed at length the administrative direction and security command at the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), and briefly reviewed the recent activities of several security affairs committees. End Summary.

Terrorist Passports Recovered

[1](#)2. (S REL UK AS) Minister of State for National Security (MSNS) Shirwan al-Waeli opened the meeting with a brief report that a large number of valid passports of various nationalities and persons had been discovered with a cache of IEDs. After prompting, he promised to share the data from the passports as well as copies with the MFA, MOD, and MOI. Minister of Finance Bayan Jabr noted the importance of an interagency group analyzing the passports and accompanying documents to determine the ports of entry uses, dates of entry, etc. to learn how foreign terrorists were entering the country. MSNS Waeli again promised to share lists of the information and copies of the passports with the relevant agencies. The DPM directed that an inter-Ministerial working group be established in order to share intelligence and establish: countries of origin, dates and points of entry. Min of Foreign Affairs undertook to engage with the countries concerned.

Force Generation Brief

[1](#)3. (S REL UK AS) MG A. Ali Hadi presented a briefing on force generation for the Iraqi Army (IA). He noted that through the use of Foreign Military Sales (FMS), the IA was being properly equipped. Ali gave detailed breakdowns of the staffing and equipping at the divisional, brigade, and battalion levels. He also outlined the those organizational units being given higher priority, such as the 14th Division in Basrah, as well as the spending on housing, some permanent and some temporary, for the soldiers. Funding came from both national funds and MNF-I support. MOD Abdel Qadr intervened to note that special funding was set aside for units

protecting electricity and oil infrastructure as well as military engineering units. Ali noted that the USD 4.3 billion was far less than requested, but it had been used wisely to bring up to strength many units.

¶4. (S REL UK AS) Ali noted that the current priority was to fund new units that were formed in response to the changing security situation and to complete the training and equipping at full-strength of older units. Abdel Qadr added the Iraqi ground forces are mostly complete and the other units are nearing completion. NSA Muwaffaq Rubaie intervened to note that one example of increase IA capacity was the giving of the brief - in the past this was done by MNF-I. Abdel Qadr concurred, highlighting the level of detail in the preparation of the brief.

¶5. (S REL UK AS) Rubaie asked if the logistics systems needed to support equipping and sustaining the IA would be in place by the end of the year. MOD replied that Command and Control and training were on track, but support from MNF-I for sustainment would remain necessary. He quickly added that if the MOD was able to buy what was in the 2008 budget, the forces would make serious progress towards self-sufficiency. He also noted the key role of MNF-I support with specialized units such as medical units and explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) teams. LTG James Dubik added that the Iraqi Army had grown by 60 thousand in 2007, 42 thousand in the last half of the year; it had also completed eight of 13 logistics bases. He stated that MOD had succeeded because it had coordinated a joint plan and stuck to it. In view of the numbers of new soldiers integrated into the IA and the logistics facilities up and running, he insisted that Minister Qadr was being too modest.

¶6. (S REL UK AS) Minister Qadr thanked LTG Dubik for his comments, then noted that some glitches in acquisitions still needed to be fixed with the Ministry of Finance. It was a

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procedural matter that caused delays in purchases. D/PM Salih suggested the issue could be resolved most easily if LTG Dubik, Minister Qadr, and Minister Jabr got together to solve. They agreed.

Airport Management and Security

¶7. (S REL UK AS) Speaking as Acting Minister of Transportation, MSNS Waeli reviewed the current insecure nature of the airport and steps that should be taken to eliminate the presence of squatters in the airport, and the comings and goings of unidentified people, as well as the disorganization of the offices of various government agencies at the airport. He, and several other members of the MCNS, noted that this was the fourth or fifth time that Airport management and security was being raised at the MCNS - it was time for a final resolution. Among the recommendations Waeli presented from the NSA's Joint Planning council was a limit of 8,000 on access badges to the airport and overall direction of the airport in the Direction of Civil Aviation.

¶8. (S REL UK AS) Bolani reacted swiftly and strongly, denouncing the idea of a civilian airport official having oversight of Ministry of Interior police, customs, and immigration officers. He said such a situation was unheard of. INIS, NSA, Transportation, and the Airport Authority representative replied that it was international airport operating standards for a single airport director to have overall authority - INIS emphasizing that without adopting this system, the airport would never get international certification. Minister of Interior Bolani would not hear of it.

¶9. (S REL UK AS) There then ensued a lively discussion with most MCNS members lined up against MOI Bolani, who was joined, at times, by Minister of Finance Jabr. D/CG LTG (UK)

Rollo then interjected a bit of common sense into what was becoming a fruitless back-and-forth. He noted that there is a difference between directing operations of an airport and commanding the security for it. He outlined the three steps that must be taken for BIAP: first, amend Iraqi laws so that the airport operating standards comply with international standards; next, empower the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority to run BIAP; finally, contract with out security at the airport to an internationally recognized security firm for another year while training MOI personnel to handle security at the airport. He later reiterated that the Airport Director runs the airport, coordinating all the offices there while the Director's security manager would run security. Bolani continued to disagree.

¶10. (C REL UK AS) Minister of Finance Jabr complained that leaving airport security in the hands of the Ministry of Transportation or the Airport Authority would be a grave error. He noted that he, a minister, had had his luggage violated and objects stolen, and if that is what happened to him, imagine what happened to non-ministerial travelers. NSA Rubaie joked that the luggage handlers must have known the minister with the money was traveling and that is why his luggage was ransacked. D/PM Barhma Salih added that they must find the perpetrator and reward him - he is the first Iraqi to get money from the Minister of Finance. We have yet to see the all-important MCNS report of the discussion.

¶11. (S REL UK AS) Considerable further wrangling followed this bit of levity at Jabr's expense. NSA Rubaie reminded the MCNS that the issue had been studied to death and must be decided at the MCNS level, that is, delegating to a lower-level was not an option. D/PM Salih finally called an end to the discussion. He said that the Airport Director would be in charge, that for one year more an international security firm would be contracted to provide security, and that MOI would work with MNF-I to train security personnel to take over security functions at the airport in one year, if those trained were ready. (Note: Though studied to death, and apparently resolved by the D/PM, the Ministry of Interior representative to the Deputy/MCNS stated the next day that the MCNS resolution could not be implemented. A lower-level discussion, mirroring the MCNS discussion, then ensued for 40 minutes, with no apparent conclusion. End Note.)

Committee Reports

12.(S REL UK AS) NSA Rubaie then delivered a brief report on the activities in the past week of five security committees: the Crisis Action Cell for Baghdad, the D/MCNS, the National

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Agency for Intelligence Coordination, the General Crisis Cell, and the Chiefs of Supporting Committees for the Fardh Al Qanon Plan. Most noteworthy was a list of recommendations for the General Crisis Cell evaluating the situation in Mosul, Ninewa province. The list of 18 recommendations tracks very closely with Embassy reporting on the presentation of the Mosul Concept of Operations, ref. B.

13.(S REL UK AS) Under any other business, the D/CG raised the issue of what measures could be taken to counter the use of women in suicide bomb attacks, including raining groups of female volunteers as searchers. The D/PM agreed that this was a serious problem which merited further consideration and would, therefore, be discussed at D/MCNS with a view to bringing the issue to MCNS.
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